

# Ramadan 2021: Luton Guidance for Mosques

**Author: Elizabeth Elliott (Public health Registrar Luton Borough Council) and Suliman Rafiq (Senior Public Health Manager Luton Borough Council)**

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## Background

Luton continues to have significantly higher rates of COVID-19 than the national average and with Ramadan 2021 anticipated to start on April 12 or 13 which coincide with wider easing of restrictions across England on the 12 April, it is vitally important to be aware of the precautions that will need to continue to be applicable.

Some relevant changes from the current guidance during Step 1 to Step 2 which are anticipated to begin on 12 April include:

- Non-essential retail can open including:
  - Personal care
  - Libraries and community centres
  - Outdoor attractions
- Outdoor hospitality can restart
- Funerals can continue with 30 attendees
- Weddings, wakes and receptions can now include 15 attendees

For full details of the changes see appendix I

## Guidance:

Current national guidance allows for places of worship to function within the capacity of the site, based on a risk assessment.

See [National guidance for places of worship](#)

### Key items to note:

- Venue managers of places of worship will have discretion over when they consider it safe to open and should decide to remain closed if they are not able to safely adhere to the guidelines outlined below.
- Further lowering capacity - even if it is possible to seat a larger numbers of people inside a venue safely, it may not be safe for them all to travel to and from, or enter and exit, the venue.
- Staggering entry times with other local venues and taking steps to avoid queues building up in surrounding areas.

- Establishing pre-booking arrangements so that, at particularly busy times, no more than can be safely accommodated arrive at the venue.
- Arranging one-way travel routes between transport hubs and venues. Advising visitors to avoid particular forms of transport or routes and to avoid crowded areas when in transit to the venue.
- To help decide which actions to take, we advise that a COVID-19 risk assessment is completed by each place of worship and for some events or gatherings this will be required by law. This may be done in addition to any risk assessment already in place or as a separate assessment.

The Muslim Council of Britain has produced [guidance](#) for mosques to consider: however due to higher than average local rates of transmission of Covid19 in Luton we would urge additional caution to protect our communities and in particular we would ask places of worship to consider the following:

- **Undertake Risk assessment**

Each mosque to undertake and review their risk assessment: For assistance with checking of risk assessment please email [c19workingsafely@luton.gov.uk](mailto:c19workingsafely@luton.gov.uk)

- **Rapid testing for attendees at the Mosque**

Encourage/expecting regular testing especially for those attending mosque see our [website](#) for details on testing.

- **Promoting the COVID 19 vaccination as the best form of protection against COVID 19**

Regular encouragement and sharing of [importance of the vaccine](#) including during Ramadan. Please start to incorporate brief messaging on the importance of the Covid Vaccine as soon as possible as well as that those who have had the vaccine still need to follow the guidelines.

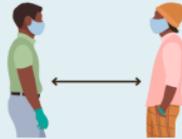
- **Particular item to note**

If you decide to conduct communal prayer please see particular areas to consider to ensure you are COVID compliant:

1. Taraweh prayers

Due to the normal length of prayers these are **not recommended**, however, if they are being undertaken please consider:

**How can we minimise risk?**

EXPOSURE	DISTANCE	TIME
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Entry policy</li> <li>• Masks</li> <li>• Ventilation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2m distancing throughout</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reducing duration at the venue</li> </ul>
		

- No over 60s or under 10s to attend as per [MCB guidance](#)
  - Wudu should be undertaken at home
2. Additionally please consider the following issues carefully
- How to ensure full ventilation of the rooms during the night prayer?
  - Can the prayers be conducted outdoors? Please consider noise and impact on neighbours.
  - Can the prayers be live streamed for access at home?
  - Can everyone be asked to undertake rapid COVID tests (LFTs) before attending prayers?
  - How to ensure everyone wears their mask at all times whilst in the Mosque including before during and after prayers?
  - Can everyone be discouraged from socialising before and after prayers and on the way home?
3. Iftar
- Iftar **should not** be conducted in mosques. In addition, household mixing **will not be allowed indoors and the rule of 6 will apply outdoors** and therefore we ask that it is reinforced to families to be aware of this rule
4. Itikaaf
- As per the MCB guidance **we do not recommend Itikaaf in mosques this year**
5. Eid
- As per the MCB guidance being prepared for Eid will be critical

## Wider support of COVID-19 messages during Ramadan

We appreciate that the above guidance is focused on places of worship but acknowledge that mosques also play a crucial role in sharing key messages:

- Take up the offer of the vaccine and promote to others that you have done
- Promote the importance of regular testing
- Promote the importance of individuals taking care when shopping to maintain social distancing, wear a mask and keep the rules around numbers in shops etc.
- Consider how to ensure safe Eid celebrations in line with [MCB guidance](#) and national guidance on social distancing, and isolation where necessary

## Appendix I

### STEP 2

At least five weeks after Step 1, no earlier than 12 April.



Indoor leisure (including gyms) open for use individually or within household groups.



Rule of 6 or two households outdoors.  
No household mixing indoors.



Outdoor attractions, such as zoos, theme parks and drive-in cinemas.



Libraries and community centres.



Personal care premises.



All retail.



Outdoor hospitality.



All children's activities, indoor parent & child groups (up to 15 parents).



Domestic overnight stays (household only).



Self-contained accommodation (household only).



Funerals (30), wakes, weddings, receptions (15).



Minimise travel.  
No international holidays.



Event pilots begin.